fees in the preparatory class and in Forms IV to VI of English schools. The proposed increase, however, was actually brought into effect only in the case of English schools. This event, as you all know, furnished the occasion for those unfortunate exhibitions of organised indiscipline on the part of the student population in Trivandrum and elsewhere in Chingam last. The students' strikes at Trivandrum and the riot of the 5th Kanni in the college square in which they culminated have been the cause of so much agitation and excitement in the country that they deserve more than a passing notice. A certain section of the vernacular press has been keeping the agitation going, and insistent demands have been made from certain quarters for the appointment of a committee of enquiry. I would venture to ask of you a responsible and dispassionate analysis of the situation. I have, on another occasion, adduced fully the reasons that weighed with the Government in enhancing the fees for secondary education to a level which, by the way, is not in excess of that reached in the neighbouring State of Cochin. Assuming for the sake of argument that the Government were wrong in having done so, and that the committee on whose considered and weighty advice they acted was neither representative nor responsible, the remedy for those who thought so, clearly lay in convincing the Government, through constitutional channels, of their error. This was not done; but on the contrary the school-boys were allowed to champion their own cause and they went on strike. Had they stopped with this, nothing more than a disciplinary notice of their conduct would have been called for. But it is an undisputed fact that the strikers soon assumed a militant attitude and molested peaceful students and law-abiding citizens. Government conveyed warnings in the shape of Press Communiqués and the District Magistrate of Trivandrum issued a prohibitory order. These preventive measures had no effect on the strikers and their sympathisers, who organised a second strike on even a larger scale than before with a more pronounced outburst of lawlessness, and this culminated in the unlawful assemblage of a very large number of school-boys and others in the college square on the 5th Kanni and in open acts of violence in defiance of constituted authority. No Government could allow such lawlessness and the rioters had to be dispersed by force, which in the present instance, however, was only employed by way of self-defence. That the force so used was not excessive is proved conclusively by the absence of any serious injuries among the rioters. The earlier stories of broken limbs have proved to be as much a myth as the later one of the death, after more than a month of the event, of a school boy as the result of injuries sustained by him during the riot. The evidence in this case shows that the boy died, not as the result of injuries, but of typhoid fever. There is again a conspicuous absence of complaints from persons said to have been injured during the riot, and in the case of two members of the College staff who were reported to have been roughly handled by the Police, although they were invited to adduce evidence, they abstained from doing so. The solitary complaint lodged by a College student before the First Class Magistrate, Trivandrum, had to be thrown out by him, on the complainant himself admitting that the assembly in which he participated was an unlawful one. It was not his case that excessive force was used for the dispersal of that assembly, and it is on record that the injury sustained by him was only trivial. If there was any one who had received any serious injury, nothing prevented him from coming forward and producing the necessary evidence. These are the broad, outstanding facts of the case, and after a repeated and anxious consideration, Government are unable to find in them any justification for the appointment of a committee of enquiry. No one deplores the strikes and their aftermath more than the Government themselves. It is not the intention of Government to negative the possibility of individual excesses on occasions of this kind, and I would avail myself of this opportunity to convey to you the assurance that both Government and their responsible officers have ever been and still are most anxious to visit with condign punishment every such case of excess in the event of its being properly proved.

23. Efficiency of Administration.—In my address last year, I foreshadowed the action that I proposed to take with a view to increase the efficiency of the services by improving their salaries and prospects and revising the methods of their work, and to keep down expenditure by effecting retrenchments wherever possible. The decision to appoint an Efficiency Audit Officer to examine the conditions

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of office work and suggest improvements in its methods was given effect to on the 1st Meenam 1096, and Mr. M. Rajaraja Varma, Dewan Peishkar, Southern Division, was appointed to that post. As Efficiency Audit Officer, Mr. Rajaraja Varma has done valuable work calculated to materially simplify office routine, economise expenditure, and facilitate the check of office procedure. He was also made the President of a Committee of officials and non-officials appointed to suggest the revision of salaries and retrenchment of establishments. This Committee has done its work with commendable promptitude and has submitted a useful report. The proposals of the committee are confined to appointments the minimum pay of which is less than Rs. 150 per mensem, but the committee has offered some valuable suggestions in regard to retrenchment and improvement of salaries in the case of some higher appointments also. The preliminary conferences and discussions with heads of departments are over and the final orders of Government in the case of a majority of the services will be issued without delay.

24. A close examination of the strength of the several services and the work to be done by them has revealed the fact that, from the numerical standpoint, the staffs are not as excessive as they were supposed to be, and that a wholesale reduction of establishment is not possible anywhere without serious detriment to efficiency. It is also worthy of note that the expenditure on the services in this State is moderate as compared with that in other progressive countries. No finality has yet been reached, but a knowledge of the reductions already effected as well as of those now in contemplation will convince you of the fact that the subject of retrenchment is one about which Government are in right earnest. A net saving to the extent of about Rs. 30,000 per annum has been effected in the immediate past, while the retrenchments to be carried out in the immediate future are expected to give a further net saving of about Rs. 1,50,000. But, even after making every possible allowance for retrenchment, the scheme for improvement of salaries must result in a material addition to the recurring expenditure of the State.

25. Prominent among the appointments that have been newly created with a view to meet the progressive expansion of administrative activities is that of the Land Revenue and Income Tax Commissioner. The creation of this appointment, without which adequate efficiency and co-ordination in the working of the Land Revenue Department could not be secured, became imminent on the passing of the Income Tax Regulation, VIII of 1096, which rendered unavoidable the appointment of a responsible and experienced officer to supervise and control the difficult operations under that Regulation, and both the functions were combined for the sake of economy in one post which was filled by the appointment to it of the senior Dewan Peishkar.

26. Government have not yet reached a decision on the question of the constitution of a board calculated to afford equal opportunities to all communities in the matter of recruitment to the services. It is true that such a board could make selections and draw up lists of approved candidates from all communities, but the power of making appointments would still vest in the heads of departments and offices, and Governmental intervention and scrutiny would still be necessary to see that these latter are impartial in the exercise of their patronage. In the circumstances it is a question whether the creation of a board of this kind would not be merely a source of additional expenditure with no commensurate public advantage. I may observe that similar boards created elsewhere are coming in for a good deal of adverse criticism. In the meantime, Government are doing their best to secure the end in view by the issue of stringent departmental instructions and by the scrutiny of monthly returns received from departmental heads. It is, however, too soon to draw any useful conclusions from these statistics.

27. Finance.—I now come to the all-important subject of finance. While the Government are grateful for an occasional expression of feeling of the readiness of the people to contribute their share to the increasing cost of a progressive administration, they cannot at the same time be oblivious of the more incessant cry of excessive taxation. It behoves you, the representatives of the people, to see what

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